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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Project Director

31 October 1955

SUBJECT : Intelligence Requirements for Project AQUATONE

REFERENCE : Memorandum for Project Director, dated 20 October, TS-142620.

1. I had an opportunity to read this memorandum only rather hastily on 29 October. My quick reaction to it is as follows:

a. I concur in the rather urgent need for a list of intelligence requirements and for the best indication that can be obtained of relative priorities. This list should, of course, reflect the requirements of all parts of the intelligence community to the extent to which it is feasible.

b. I think the suggestion of using the President's proposal as cover for the purpose of assembling these requirements may turn out to be an excellent one depending somewhat, however, on the organizational procedure we decide to use.

c. As to procedure, I hope we can go about the collection of requirements in a simpler fashion than proposed in the referenced memorandum.

d. The immediate steps to be taken to set this activity in motion and to test out the effectiveness of a more informal procedure would seem to me to be the following:

(1) Prior to our meeting on 8 November with representatives of SAC and the Director of Intelligence, USAF, we should arrive at a firm proposal as to the cover story to be used in eliciting requirements from various parts of the community.

(2) We should also, prior to that meeting, prepare a suggestion as to the channels to be used. I would think our own Project Intelligence Officer (who will be available by then) could be responsible for a direct approach to all CIA components. Obviously, the A-2 and SAC representatives between them will cover the Air Force. We should certainly approach the

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[redacted] for the purpose. Accordingly, the real problem would be to determine the most secure and effective channel for an approach to the Army and Navy.

(3) As requirements come in it should be the function of the Project Intelligence Officers to set them out in an orderly fashion and to indicate the priorities attaching to particular requirements by the several agencies. It should then, I suggest, be the function of the Project/A-2/SAC committee to examine cases of competing priorities and recommend the priority to be attached for our purposes.

e. It would probably be necessary at an early stage in this procedure to advise one senior officer in each intelligence agency of the true purpose for the requirements that are being assembled so that the request for requirements and priorities will be honored. This can be done without cutting in any new persons in CIA, the Air Force, [redacted] and the Office of Naval Intelligence. It may be necessary, however, to cut in the new G-2, Major General Ridgely Gaither, so that our requests will receive favorable attention in G-2.

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2. It is my belief that an approach along these lines will permit us to go forward with the assembly of requirements in an informal and expeditious manner. I am fearful that if the task is put in the hands of a committee which thinks it is preparing a requirements list for legal overflights in accordance with the Geneva proposal, much time and energy will go into debates among the various consumers over the priorities to be accorded certain items. Moreover, the committee would be operating on the assumption of an almost unlimited capability which might cause it to leave unmade certain choices that are of crucial importance to us. Finally, the informal procedure here proposed would have the benefit of leaving final priority decisions in our own hands, where I am convinced these decisions must lie because in the last analysis our operations must be guided by the weighing not only of the priorities of the various requirements but also of various operational considerations.

s/per m

RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Project Director

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